PART XVIII.—BOUNDARIES, BOUNDARY MARKS AND FENCING OF FORESTS.

1. Prickly-pear should not be used for fencing when any other description of hedge is available. (G. R. No. 2169, dated 7th May 1870.)

2. In the matter of planting prickly-pear it seems to Government that, while large sums are paid for its eradication throughout the Presidency, it would be very unwise to introduce it as a live boundary fence to forest reserves. It might possibly answer the purpose of checking the spread of fires in forests, but at the same time it is a plant so easily spread, and so difficult to eradicate when once it has taken root, that Government cannot countenance the idea of using it as a fence for forests. (G. R. No. 1924, dated 25th March 1876.)

3. Care should be taken to practise economy in the erection of the longer description of boundary marks in forest. There is no necessity for their being so near together as at intervals of a hundred feet. It will be advisable that the one on each side of it should be visible from each of these. With this exception, all intermediate bends may be denoted by smaller marks. (G. R. No. 4082, dated 23rd August 1871.)

4. The boundary marks of interior survey numbers of a forest block may be allowed to fall into disrepair, the boundary marks on the outer boundary of the outer survey numbers on the forest reserve boundaries being annually inspected and repaired. (G. R. No. 6626, dated 7th November 1877.)

5. Government wish to impress upon the Forest Department the desirability of proper demarcation fencing and guarding of plantations and forest reserves. The mere fact that a few seeds have been sown in a portion of a gairán is not sufficient to entitle a Forest Officer to treat as trespassing, and to send summarily to the pound, cattle which may happen to enter that part of the gairán. There must be some outward and visible sign of closure of gairán in the shape of fences or watchers. In future when a portion of a gairán has been prepared for closure by the Forest Department, the Forest Officer should report the fact to the Assistant Collector, who will take measures to ascertain if the necessary fences have been erected, and if satisfied on this point will then give orders for the closing of portion of gairán. No cattle should be allowed to be seized or impounded by the forest guards until the formal orders, as above directed, by the Assistant Collector for the closure of the land have been issued. (G. R. No. 1866, dated 10th April 1880.)

6. The most effectual means of protecting the reserved forest areas from the intrusion of cattle is to fence them properly. The measure is costly and requires time, but the officers of the Forest Department should at once take the work in hand, and push it on as speedily as possible.

Some degree of tact and discretion must be displayed by the Forest Officers in cases where cattle are found straying or grazing in the closed reserves. In the case of first offence, it will ordinarily suffice to turn the cattle out and warn the owners. In the case of a second offence, impounding the animals would be justifiable, and would probably be the only way of convincing their owners that the conservation of the forest was intended to be real. (G. R. No. 2437, dated 21st March 1885.)

7. Government do not desire to prevent Forest Officers from impounding animals which are deliberately driven into reserved forests or are allowed through wilful negligence on the part of their owners to stray into such forests, but full consideration should be given to the fact that, while the forests are not closed by fences it is very difficult to hinder cattle from occasionally entering them, and it is not in the interest of the Forest Department to irritate the people by impounding their cattle for light reason. If the subordinate officers adhere strictly to the following practice described by the Conservator of Forests, Northern Circle, there will be no cause for complaint:—

"Cattle which are not properly cared for by their owners, and are not fed by them, but are allowed to pick up a subsistence by pilfering food whenever they can, richly deserve to be impounded when they come into a plantation or into an improving forest. Cattle deliberately driven into property not their own, or into property known to be 'closed', by lawless Dhangars and other owners of cattle likewise deserve to be taken to the pound. Cattle which are habitually kept under control, but through accident have strayed, or for the presence of which inside a closed forest there may be a reasonable excuse, are not, as a rule, impounded, but the owners are warned to be more careful of them in future." (G. R. No. 5763, dated 17th July 1885.)